Information structure and changes in Moklen word-form

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In this study, we investigate an apparent discourse-based alternation between monosyllabic and disyllabic word-forms in Moklen, an Austronesian language spoken in Thailand. We explore whether factors of information structure condition the variable elision of the first syllable of certain disyllabic lexemes. Data was obtained through the implementation of a picture-based field stimulus to elicit a range of lexical material within narrow discourse contexts. Our results reveal that no single information status category (e.g., "given" or "new") accounted for use of monosyllabic alternants overall. Applying a "bottom-up" approach to the study of information structure (Matić, 2022; Ozerov, 2018), we propose a shift to "topics" — information conveyed as mutual knowledge (Masia, 2022) — as one possible account for the observed changes in Moklen word-form. More generally, our study shows how information structure processes have the potential to contribute to contextual alternation between monosyllabic and disyllabic word-forms, a matter with implications for broader historical changes in word-form.

Keywords: Moklen, information structure, word-form, clipping, monosyllabization

1. Introduction

Information structure is a field of linguistic inquiry looking at "the ways linguistically encoded information is presented relative to the speaker's estimate of the temporary mental state of the receiver of the message" (Matić, 2015, p. 95). Research of information structure in lesser-described languages is now more common (Adamou, Haude, & Vanhoe, 2018), but often such research entails overcoming challenges, such as low language vitality, difficulties in access, and lack of linguistic resources. One such language is Moklen, spoken by one of the three

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"sea-peoples" of Thailand's Andaman coast (Arunotai, 2017). Along with its sister language, *Moken*, Moklen is a member of the *Moklenic* group within the Austronesian language family (Larish, 1999). Previous research on Moklen centers mostly on comparative historical matters of the larger Moklenic language family (Larish, 1999), with existing grammatical descriptions (Swastham, 1982; Larish, 2005) based almost entirely on translation-based direct elicitation.

One interesting feature of Moklen is its variability in lexical word-form. The majority of the lexicon consists of an iambic disyllable word type made up of an initial *minor syllable* and a stressed *major syllable* (e.g., *ˌtəʔáw* 'sea', *ˌkaˈbáːŋ* 'boat'). Although disyllables are the most prevalent word-form, Moklenic words have also long been noted to exhibit variant monosyllabic forms consisting of just the major syllable (Court, 1971; Lewis, 1960). Larish (1999) points out that a common context for these reduced word-forms are compounds, wherein disyllables like *ʔɔláːŋ* 'people' and *ʔɛkáːn* 'fish' are realized as monosyllables, such as *láːŋ pɔlàːw* 'island people' and *káːn mɛláːk* 'red-bellied fusilier'. Noting additional reductions of lexemes within connected speech, Larish (1999) uses the term "non-ultimate syllabic aphaeresis" to describe a synchronic phenomenon of disyllables with "optional" minor syllables. Here, Larish's (1999) aim is to distinguish between variant reduced forms appearing during speech from an additional diachronic shift of disyllables into monosyllables. For example, monosyllabic verbs such as *dín* 'to come', *káw* 'to go', *dán* 'to know' have already exhibited a permanent loss of the minor syllable, while Moklen's sister language, Moken, still maintains the corresponding disyllabic forms (*ŋadin* 'to come', *lakaw* 'to go', and *mədan* 'to know').

Important for understanding changes in Moklenic word-form is their context within the Mainland Southeast Asian (MSEA) linguistic area (Enfield, 2021). Despite being Austronesian in origin, Moklenic languages are more similar to typological norms of MSEA languages. For instance, they have already undergone phonological shifts towards MSEA linguistic norms (Larish, 1997; Pittayaporn, 2005, 2024). One notable aspect includes a change to the so-called sesquisyllabic word template, wherein initial minor syllables are shorter in length and feature a reduced phonological inventory.[1] Monosyllabization (diachronic changes from polysyllables to monosyllables) is also a prominent topic within MSEA linguistics (Matisoff, 1990; Michaud, 2012) in which language contact is often framed as a catalyst (cf. Brunelle & Pittayaporn, 2012). Larish (1999), noting a Moklen shift towards monosyllabism, sees it as analogous to purported contact-induced changes of word-form in Chamic languages, fellow Austronesian languages of MSEA (Brunelle, 2020; Thurgood, 1999).

1. For simplicity we adopt the more standard term "disyllables" for Moklen words with two syllables. For more on "sesquisyllables," see Butler (2015) and Pittayaporn (2015).

Although the diachronic implications of minor-syllable loss are interesting, especially for a discussion of monosyllabization within MSEA, the synchronically variable appearance of Moklen's reduced monosyllabic word-forms, hereafter *monosyllabic alternants*, has never been directly studied. Within current efforts for Moklen documentation (Loss, 2023; Pittayaporn & Choemprayong, 2024; Pittayaporn, Pornpottanamas, & Loss 2022), the common appearance of monosyllabic alternants became an area of interest. Particularly intriguing is the observation that during free-flowing speech, as opposed to direct elicitation, monosyllabic alternants frequently appeared alongside their corresponding disyllabic forms. For example, in (1), disyllabic *mə4nut4* 'person' appears first before shifting to monosyllabic *nut4* 'person' in the immediately following utterance.[2]

(1) *ticúm nəŋéːn* ***mə4nut4*** *…* ***nut4*** *ləbút*
bird chase person person run
'The bird is chasing the person. The person runs.'

The notable frequency of monosyllabic alternants throughout speech, along with the co-occurrence of its disyllabic form (referred to in this paper as a "co-occurring disyllable"), presents an interesting case of variability throughout Moklen discourse. Moreover, that the type of elision shown in (1) is observable for an abundance of lexemes suggests that the clipping of the minor syllable might be a more general phenomenon. Furthermore, the fact that Moklen speakers generally judge attested long and short forms as essentially equivalent implies that differences in word-form do not convey a significant morphosyntactic or semantic distinction. Previous researchers had already reported the appearance of reduced monosyllabic alternants in Moklenic languages (Court, 1971; Larish, 1999; Lewis, 1960; Wolff, 2010), but they had only ever been framed as "colloquial forms" and not subjected to further analysis. We therefore are interested not only in the monosyllabic alternants but also in cases of word-form shifts — changes between the two word-forms during speech, as exemplified by (1). In particular, we see the potential for real-time discourse processes as a factor that might account for the observed variation.

2. To clearly indicate words of a "Thai" origin we adopted a convention using numerical labels (1–5) that correspond to the lexical tone of Standard Thai. We do not claim that these words originate from Standard Thai; rather, we believe they are more likely from Southern Thai. However, due to the lack of research on this topic, we use the Standard Thai numerical labels for convenience. One interesting feature of Moklen is the development of a two-way contrast in lexical tone on the stressed major syllable (Maspong, Burroni, Sukanchanon, & Pittayaporn, 2024; Pornpottanamas, Maspong, & Pittayaporn, 2023). Following Pittayaporn, Pornpottanamas, and Loss (2022) we use an acute accent (V́) to indicate Tone 1 and a grave accent (V̀) to indicate Tone 2.

We believe the frequent omission of minor syllables represents a dynamic process of reduction in spontaneous speech. Our perspective is influenced by Chafe (1994), who argues that the flow of ideas in conscious awareness mirrors the structure of "intonation units" of speech (see §2.1). Within Chafe's (1994) model of information packaging, there is an observed correspondence between "activation" and *linguistic prominence*, whereby items that are "given" — salient, topical, or common ground knowledge — incur a lower cognitive cost and therefore demand less phonetic material of speakers productively as well as listeners receptively (see also "the effort code" as in Gussenhoven, 2004). Our core assumption, therefore, is that for word-form shifts like that in (1), there is a potential connection between prosodic attenuation of a linguistic expression and its "givenness" — the degree to which something is "activated" or within *common ground* (Baumann & Riester, 2012).

In this study, we investigate the relationship between matters of information structure and changes in Moklen word-form. Heeding recent calls for a "bottom-up approach" to information structure research (Matić, 2022; Ozerov, 2018), we eschew many previous ready-made theoretical models and instead offer some generalizations based on our description of the data. Our initial hypothesis was that a form of *givenness* (i.e., being common ground content) might account for the reduction of certain disyllables into monosyllables. To collect Moklen data, we implemented a custom-designed field stimulus, the *Transitive Event Picture Sequences* (TEPS). Based on a methodology of using staged-communicative events for documentary corpora (Himmelmann, 1998), the TEPS task had Moklen speakers describe a series of brief illustrated vignettes of transitive events. This allowed for the elicitation of a variety of lexemes, offering several examples of speakers managing "new" and "given" information in a semi-spontaneous speech context. Analysis of monosyllabic alternants and their co-occurring disyllables began by tagging them in terms of *information status* — givenness classifications of linguistic expressions (e.g., "given" or "new" information). Specifically, we adopted the *RefLex Scheme*, a relatively recent taxonomy of information status that tracks givenness at both a referential and lexical level (Baumann & Riester, 2012; Riester & Baumann, 2017). Use of this two-dimensional approach to information-status tagging in particular suited our need to examine givenness for Moklen lexemes across word classes and not only how referring expressions track discourse referents, the more typical domain of previous information status models (e.g., Gundel, Hedberg, & Zacharski, 1993).

Although the RefLex Scheme is put forward as a solution to several theoretical and practical problems surrounding the annotation of givenness, initial results had no single information-status category as indicative of the use of monosyllabic alternants. Therefore, we ruled out changes in word-form as a formal means of encoding givenness of individual linguistic expressions (i.e., particular words

or referring expressions). However, we saw a persistent pattern of "new" disyllables occurring before "given" monosyllables as still suggesting a broader informational shift. We therefore propose framing the *switch* to a monosyllabic alternant as often reflecting a shift to *topical* information — utterance information presented as common ground content (Masia, 2022). This view was supported by the frequent occurrence of monosyllabic alternants at the start of intonation units and near positions of ellipsed arguments, contexts associable with topical information. Despite limitations, and a need for further theoretical development, this study helps outline an interesting case of variation in Moklen and allows us to offer an account of how information structure factors might contribute to changes in word-form.

2. Background

The field of *information structure* (IS) looks at how the "packaging" or "management" of linguistic forms encodes the exchange of information between interlocutors. Core to the IS perspective is the idea that having information mutually known by interlocutors impacts a speaker's use of language (Krifka & Musan, 2012). Therefore, within the IS approach there is a general view that "linguistic form varies as a function of informational considerations" (Arnold, Kaiser, Kahn, & Kim, 2013, p. 403). Common within the field is the positing of universal formal grammatical categories like *topic, focus*, and *givenness* (e.g., Lambrecht, 1994), each of which has been applied extensively in a multitude of studies of well-known languages. However, Ozerov (2018, 2021) and Matić (2022) question the application of traditional definitions of IS notions across a range of typologically diverse languages and call for more "bottom-up" research in the field from a more diverse range of languages. With the bottom-up approach, researchers are encouraged to start with observable linguistic phenomena (e.g., shifts in word-form), see how they might contribute to common ground management between interlocutors, and then generalize across the data in a dialectical process with "as *little* theory as possible" (Matić, 2022, p. 108; emphasis ours) — all while continually acknowledging methodological commitments.

Among the various concepts discussed in the IS literature, we review three important concepts that are relevant to our study, namely *intonation units, information status*, and a *topic-focus* distinction. Intonation units are primarily a prosodic reference unit for segmenting speech. However, they are also thought to outline both grammatical and informational properties of speech (Chafe, 1994) and therefore are one starting point for analysis. Information statuses serve as potential givenness classifications of referring expressions or lexical material

(Riester & Baumann, 2017). They are used to categorize a single referent's or a single word's givenness within a span of discourse. The topic-focus distinction, while somewhat terminologically troublesome (see §2.3), reflects the common approach within the field of IS of splitting utterances into two, one part functioning to establish common ground and the other functioning to update it. Assuming the bottom-up approach we use these concepts in a dialectal process across our description of Moklen intonation units, considering the givenness of referents and words and the role of utterance parts.

2.1 Intonation units

One major methodological problem of linguistic analysis is segmentation into "basic units of speech" (Izre'el, Mello, Panunzi, & Ramo, 2020). For Chafe (1994), the main units of speech are intonation units, the "chunks" and "spurts" of natural spontaneous speech. Intonation units (IUs) are chiefly a perceptual unit, but in practice, researchers from a discourse-functional approach identify IUs using a bundle of acoustic cues (Barth-Weingarten, 2016).[3] Key cues include boundary pauses, a coherent intonation contour, and pitch reset. Importantly, IUs should not be confused with the intonational phrase of *Prosodic Phonology* (Nespor & Vogel, 2012) that starts with the "sentence" as a central construct (Izre'el et al., 2020). A key difference being that IUs start from a unified prosodic chunk and its communicative function before moving to analysis of grammatical structure.

At a practical level, segmentation into IUs first serves discourse transcription by more accurately presenting the intermittent nature of speech in writing. Furthermore, for languages without writing, like Moklen, an IU-based approach is crucial for providing prosodic evidence of natural syntactic units (Simard & Schultze-Berndt, 2011). Significant for Chafe (1994), however, is the idea that IUs also represent a singular focusing of consciousness and thereby outline discrete *informational units*. This understanding of the relationship between thought and speech suggests that language data obtained through direct elicitation or grammaticality judgments may miss many of the subtle dynamic informational packaging processes happening during real-time communication as they represent performative metalinguistic judgments (Schütze, 2016). For our study, intonation units are significant as they are the basic reference unit of speech, outlining not only a prosodically bound strand of grammatical structures but also a cohesive informational unit relevant for a study of information structure.

3. In interlinear glosses of this paper we use '…' to demarcate discrete intonation units.

2.2 Information status

One means of capturing what is common ground content is *givenness*, the degree to which an item (e.g., a linguistic expression) is known to be shared information (Krifka & Musan, 2012). Models of givenness are often put forth under rubrics of *information status* categories, that is, givenness classifications of linguistic expressions, with the core distinction being between categories of "given" and "new" information (see Röhr, 2016 for a history of information status). Information status, traditionally, is associated with how referring expressions track discourse referents. However, Baumann and Riester (2012) argue that mere coreference is inadequate at capturing the full range of givenness effects in language. The authors hold that a system of cohesion among lexicogrammatical elements in discourse also allows for a type of conceptual givenness. Therefore, non-referential expressions (e.g., verbs) may be considered given if they have a conceptual antecedent, for example, an identical expression or synonym.[4] To study information status, Baumann and Riester (2012, p. 2) propose the *RefLex Scheme*, as a "data-oriented rather than philosophical or semantic classification" of referring and non-referring expressions in relation to their degree of givenness. Offering a practical operationalization of information-status tagging, the key feature of the proposal is the classification of information status at both a referential and lexical level. For example, Baumann and Riester (2012) frame deaccentuation of the underlined elements in (2) and (3) as connected to two different types of givenness.

(2) a. *Did you see Dr. Cremer to get your root canal?*
b. *Don't remind me. I'd like to STRANgle <u>the butcher</u>.*

(3) a. *Why do you study Italian?*
b. *I'm MArried to <u>an Italian</u>.*

In (2) *the butcher* is deaccented as it is *referentially given*, meaning it is coreferential with the previously mentioned discourse referent *Dr. Cremer*, while for (3) *an Italian* is deaccented because it is *lexically given*. Therefore, within the RefLex Scheme, a "given" element simply means it is either a referring expression with a coreferential antecedent or a word for which the same (or similar) lexical expression was previously used. Conversely, a "new" element is either a discourse referent without a coreferential antecedent or an unused lexical concept.

4. Another way to get at the givenness effects not related to sheer coreference is to consider effects of repetition on word duration, see Kanwal, Smith, Culbertson, and Kirby (2017) and Kaland and Himmelmann (2020).

Because the scheme looks at both *referring expressions* (a syntactic domain denotating a discourse referent) and *non-referring expressions* (a conceptual or predicate-denotating level), lexical classes are covered differently. For example, nouns and classifiers can be classified both at the referential level (r-level) and the lexical level (l-level), as they can both denote discourse referents and active conceptual (i.e., lexical) content. Verbs, prepositions, and numbers, on the other hand, are non-referring expressions, as they do not pick out distinct discourse referents. Therefore, they are treated solely as lexical concepts classified at the lexical level. The main innovation of the RefLex Scheme, however, is the simultaneous tracking of two-dimensions of givenness, allowing for information status annotations at the lexical level to accompany the tracking of discourse referents at the referential level. For example, imagine first uses, that is "lexically new" uses, of the words *dog, mutt*, and *canine* for the same referent of a story. As space limitations prevent us from reviewing the full breadth and rationale of the RefLex Scheme, we only summarize its major concepts that are relevant for our study: the given/new distinctions of each separate dimension and their respective labels as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Information statuses of the RefLex Scheme

	New	**Given**
r-level	*r-new*	*r-given*
	discourse-new entities	previously mentioned referents
l-level	*l-new*	*l-given*
	unused lexical concept	previously used lexical concept

2.3 Topic-focus distinction

At a broader level of analysis, another important notion of IS is the division of utterances into two informational units: one based upon common ground and one that updates it (Vallduví & Engdahl, 2013). Like taxonomies of information status, a variety of terminology has been used for this dichotomy, such as presupposition-assertion, background-foreground, theme-rheme, topic-comment (Matić, 2015). Upholding the importance of speech segmentation, Cresti's (2018) illocutionary model of IS aligns the classic informational bifurcation of utterances with the pragmatic framework of speech act theory. The view here starts with the idea that a core part of utterances is their *illocutionary force* — the effect of the speech act intended by the speaker. Utterances may also have a *topic* that serves as the conceptual domain or field of application for the illocutionary force, while the *comment* accomplishes the illocutionary force. Based on Cresti's (2018) model,

Masia (2022) recharacterizes informational units of *topic* and *focus* as discourse strategies of "broad evidentiality", with the following definitions:

Focus encodes information conveyed by the speaker as her communicative intention and as *individual* knowledge of which she is the only epistemic source.[5]
Topic encodes information not conveyed as the speaker's communicative intention and which represents *mutual* knowledge established as shared conceptual grounding with both speaker and hearer as committed source.

Masia (2022) frames this reformulation of topic and focus as describing *pragmatic* functions of these informational units. Contrasting with previously "epistemically grounded profiles," in Masia's (2022) "evidential" account, topic and focus refer not just to the status of contents but rather reflect how speakers *present* these contents. While distinctions at the level of information status may capture a speaker's underlying cognitive commitment to single discrete linguistic expressions, a topic-focus distinction targets the degree to which a speaker is manifesting this for pragmatic effects. For Masia (2022), this means that topical information may in fact be "given" or "new" in strict information status terms, but when speakers present it, they will provide "linguistic clothing" which discursively commits the listener to its truth — that is, its place as part of common ground knowledge. Conversely, *focus* information, whether "new" or "given" at the level of information status, will be conveyed as deriving solely from the knowledge base of the speaker.

For linguists, any linguistic form's alignment with a particular information structure notion is an area of interest. However, since intuitions surrounding topic/focus and information statuses are both based on a picture of the relationship between interlocutors and common ground knowledge, they can sometimes be conflated (Masia, 2022). Crucially, however, each notion entails separate levels of analysis. At the level of Masia's (2022) topic/focus distinction, demarcating it within an utterance requires interpreting a speaker's *communicative intention* towards an addressee. Information status, within RefLex Scheme's data-oriented approach, however, represents more of a contextually blind process of merely tracking overt anaphoric links between single referring expressions and/or uses of particular lexemes. The possibility for overlap here underscores the complicated multifactorial process of both strategies and categories to be considered within an

5. "Focus" is also a terminologically troublesome term. According to Vallduví (2016) it is "one of the most *(ab)used* labels in information structure research" [parentheses in the original, emphasis ours] (p. 728). Case in point is Masia's (2022) repurposing of "focus" for Cresti's (2018) "comment". For more on "focus" as a universal cross-linguistic concept see Matić and Wedgwood (2013).

information structure approach (Ozerov, 2021), and ultimately poses significant challenges for any complete model of information structure.

2.4 Moklen clausal syntax

Moklen exhibits many of the typological norms of MSEA languages (Enfield, 2021); it has serial verb constructions, a range of utterance final particles and no productive inflectional morphology. Referring expressions can take the form of head-initial noun phrases, where modifiers like verbal adjectives, demonstratives, or classifier phrases follow a head noun. Constituents of transitive clauses are in AVO order (Loss, 2023), but like other languages of the region, ellipsis (or zero-anaphora) is the most common and extreme means of backgrounding information. For example, in (4), *ʔɛbáːp* 'elder male', the agent of the verb *niŋít* 'to cut', was elicited in a context where it was a new discourse referent (see § 3.1). The context for (5), however, was manipulated so that the agent was a given discourse referent at the time of speech and therefore no overt referring expression for the agent was used.[6]

(4) ***ʔɛbáːp*** *niŋít ləkɔ́ːŋ manɔ́k*
elder.male cut neck chicken
'An old man is cutting the chicken's neck.' [LP.P9.2]

(5) ***Ø*** *niŋít kɔ́ːŋ manɔ́k*
cut neck chicken
'(He is) cutting a chicken's neck.' [LN.A9.2]

Although it is very common for clausal IUs to be without overt A arguments, other arguments can also be ellipsed, such as in (6) where the O argument of the verb *lát* 'to steal' is ellipsed. Note that *ɲáː* '3.SG' is a verbal enclitic coreferential with the argument in the subject position.

(6) *cúm lát=ɲáː* ***Ø*** *met2*
bird steal=3.SG depleted
'The bird has stolen (it) all.'

Furthermore, if discourse referents are all salient it is also possible to get clausal IUs without any overt specification of the predicate's grammatical arguments, as

6. Moklen does not contain straightforward markers of definiteness. In order to create a felicitous translation, use of English articles in the translation line can be interpreted as mainly conveying a dimension of referential givenness within the discourse context of the TEPS stimulus (i.e., a previously mentioned referent). For more discussion on a contrast between "activation" and "definiteness" see Lambrecht (1994).

in (7) where all arguments of the trivalent verb *ʔɔ́n* 'to give' were retrievable from discourse context.

(7) *ʔɤː ʔɔ́n be*
AFFR.VOC give PRT
'Yeah, (I'll) just give (him) (it).'

One construction where we see an inversion of core arguments is an adversative passive construction, also a regional feature, often derived from verbs meaning 'to hit, impact'. Moklen adversative passives use the verb *kʰənáːʔ* 'to undergo' (Larish, 1999). Use of *kʰənáːʔ* is common in contexts where an experiencer undergoes an unfavorable action. For example, in (8), *canáːt* 'child' is the grammatical object of the verb *betɔ́k* 'to strike' but is in a clause-initial position.

(8) *canáːt dɔ́ːk* ***kʰənáːʔ*** *tʰuaj1man1 bətɔ́k*
child sit undergo scorpion strike
'A child sits and gets stung by the scorpion.' [WN.A18.2]

Passive constructions may also have ellipsed 'given' patients like in (9), which in this case also features the monosyllabic form of the passivizer: *náːʔ* 'to undergo'.

(9) ***Ø náːʔ*** *tʰuaj1man1 bətɔ́k*
undergo scorpion strike
'She is getting stung by a scorpion.' [TW.P18.2]

In general, Moklen clausal syntax is very similar to other MSEA languages, especially Thai, whose influence is immediately evident through the import of lexical material. One major difference, however, is Moklen's post-verbal negation, which contrasts with preverbal negation in Thai (Larish, 2005).

3. Methods

3.1 Materials and task

To investigate monosyllabic alternants, we designed the Transitive Event Picture Sequences (TEPS) field stimulus, an elicitation tool inspired by picture-based approaches to studying givenness effects on word order (Skopeteas & Fanselow, 2009). Adapting the approach, we aimed to include a variety of potential discourse referents and events in order to capture word-form shifts for a range of items from the Moklen lexicon. The TEPS stimulus gives participants the task of narrating a series of 24 transitive events depicted through three-picture sequences. Each sequence unfolds through three scenes: a *context scene*, a *target scene*, and a

resolution scene. First, the context scene serves as a cue by presenting one of two possibilities, either the agent or the patient of a following transitive event. Next, the target scene depicts both agent and patient engaged in the transitive event. Finally, the resolution scene depicts both referents and conveys the completion of the transitive event. All 24 sequences have an *agent-initial* and a *patient-initial* version. Individual participants, therefore, encounter each sequence under one of two possible conditions, each of which presents the transitive event with potentially differing levels of givenness for the referents involved (see Figure 1).

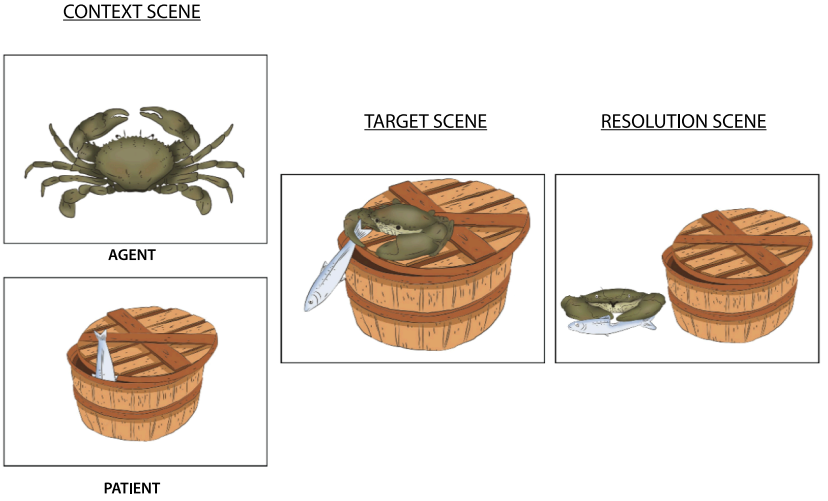

Figure 1. Full illustration set for sequence #14 'Crab grabs fish.'

Since our underlying aim was to look at changes in word-form, we carefully considered which referents and events were to be portrayed within TEPS and thereby anticipated which lexemes would be elicited. After preliminary testing, the final design offered a tool for eliciting 54 canonically disyllabic lexemes in contexts of connected speech. This included 8 general terms for human referents (contrasting in age, gender, and kinship), 22 non-human referents (animals and objects), and 24 transitive verbs. Four versions of the TEPS stimulus were compiled, each of which contrasted in terms of the control conditions (i.e., agent-initial or patient-initial sequences) and the ordering of sequences, orders that aimed to avoid givenness effects across contiguous scenes, such as avoiding back-to-back human referents. Each participant observed one single version of the stimulus. A side-by-side description and comparison of the first three sequences of two versions of the TEPS stimulus are presented in Table 2; note the different context scenes and contrasting assignment of "given" referents in the target scenes.

Table 2. Comparison of TEPS sets: A1's and B1's first three sequences

	Context	Target	Resolution
Seq. #		VERSION A	
1	Man	**Man** fishes fish.	**Man** has **fish**.
2	Crab	Fruit smashes **crab**.	**Crab** is dead under **fruit**.
3	Chickens	**Chickens** break branch.	**Branch** has fallen. **Chickens** descend.
		VERSION B	
1	Fish	Man fishes **fish**.	**Man** has **fish**.
2	Fruit	**Fruit** smashes crab.	**Crab** is dead under **fruit**.
3	Branch	Chickens break **branch**.	**Branch** has fallen. **Chickens** descend.
		(**Bold**= "given")	

Each illustration was printed in color onto a single side of an A4 sheet of paper in a landscape orientation. All illustrations were then bound into books preserving each version's determined order. A numbered filler page was inserted to break up each three-page sequence. With three illustrations per sequence, a TEPS book contained 72 illustration pages and 24 filler pages. The final design of the TEPS stimulus was intended to balance limitations of a picture-based stimulus in the field, needs of the target population, and the framing of our research question (see Appendix). Examples in this study drawn from TEPS data indicate the context under which speech was elicited with the coded tag at the end of each translation line. This includes a two-letter participant code, the sequence ID number (1–24), control condition (A = agent-initial, P = patient-initial), and scene number (1–3).

3.2 Participants and procedure

TEPS sessions with Moklen speakers were led by the first author in early 2022. All participants (*M* age = approx. 60; *range* = 44–77) were from Phang Nga and Phuket provinces. Sessions were held with 16 participants (8 male, 8 female) from a total of 10 villages. The inclusion of participants across several locations reflects the reality of the situation as the number of speakers that met our inclusion criteria is very small. This is mainly due to extremely low language vitality and the age of remaining fluent speakers. Not only is the number of existing speakers limited, our picture-based elicitation tool also required participants to possess sufficient visual acuity. It is worth stressing, however, that these separate geographic locations are not necessarily socially discreet communities, as they form an extensive social network and intermarriage among the villages is the norm.

The data collection comprised 16 sessions, each of which took place at or near the participant's residence as a collaborative session of language elicitation between the researcher and a Moklen language consultant (see Figure 2). All participants provided verbal consent for the audio and video recording of the sessions.

Figure 2. Participant during TEPS session (Photo by Athikhom Saengchai)

The aim of a TEPS session was to elicit the responses of an individual participant. The ideal set up was the Moklen speaker and the researcher in an environment of minimal distractions. Before beginning the task, a training booklet was presented to the participant. The researcher explained that it contained short stories depicted through three illustrations, which they were to narrate. The training booklet had six practice sequences and provided an opportunity for participants to seek clarification and become familiar with the task. Participants were

then presented with a TEPS stimulus book. During the session, the researcher maintained physical control of the book, ensuring that the participant did not preview the following pages and that progression through the task was kept to a brisk yet natural pace, but participants were free to point and make physical contact with the page. Participants tended to spend anywhere from 20–90 seconds on an individual sequence. Once a participant finished describing all 24 sequences, the task was completed. On average, an entire TEPS session, excluding the training portion, lasted around 10 minutes.

3.3 Information-status tagging

Annotation of information status was done using ELAN (Sloetjes & Wittenburg, 2008). Use of the RefLex Scheme entailed differential application of the r-level and l-level for different lexical classes. Nouns and classifiers were tagged at both the l-level and r-level, as they are lexical material which can function as referential expressions. Verbs and most closed-class items (e.g., numbers and prepositions), on the other hand, were tagged only at the l-level, as they are not used in tracking discrete discourse referents. Example (10) is a composite example for illustrative purposes, showing the application of the RefLex Scheme to Moklen data. Also shown with (10) is how elicitation through the TEPS stimulus creates an overrepresentation of nouns, with the bare nominal *niʔúːn* 'coconut' appearing during description of a context scene.

(10) a. **l-new/r-new**
niʔúːn
coconut
'Coconuts.'

b. **l-given/r-given** **l-new** **l-given** - **l-new** **l-new/r-new**
ʔúːn *kəpʰlàːt* … *pʰlàːt* *ʔa=bulàt* *náːʔ* *kɛcɔ́k*
coconut fall fall 1SG=CLF impact bottle
'A coconut falls. One of them falls and hits a bottle.'
One of them falls and hits a bottle.

c. **l-given/r-given** -
cɔ́k *bəkáh*
bottle shatter
'The bottle shatters.'

It is important to note that information-status tagging for this study was limited to monosyllabic alternants and *only* those disyllables that were part of a word-form shift. For example, in (10), since monosyllabic alternants *ʔúːn* 'coconut' and *pʰlàːt* 'to fall' were members of a word-form shift, their "co-occurring disyllabic form"

(*niʔúːn* 'coconut' and *kəpʰlàːt* 'to fall') was also tagged for purposes of comparative analysis. In contrast, disyllabic forms like *bekáh* 'to shatter' and *bulàt* 'CLF' were not tagged, as they only appeared as disyllables within this sequence description. As our aim was to better understand variation, and especially the *reduction* of Moklen word-form, this means a TEPS sequence description of entirely disyllabic forms would be excluded from analysis.

3.4 Scope

This study does not aim nor attempt to account for all information structure phenomena in Moklen. As outlined in Section 3.3, our analysis focuses on the informational properties of monosyllabic alternants and the co-occurring disyllables of word-form shifts elicited by the TEPS task. Due to the nature of staged-communicative events induced by the TEPS stimulus, which are limited to a set of predetermined storylines (i.e., the picture sequences), absolute frequency of individual lexical items cannot be included as a factor in our analysis. Instead, we investigate use of monosyllabic alternants and describe word-form shifts between a disyllabic and monosyllabic forms within our narrowly constructed contexts. Our goal is to uncover potential discourse factors driving the clipping of disyllables' minor-syllables during spontaneous speech. We acknowledge that a comprehensive understanding of word-form changes would require including other frequency effects and phonological factors (see §5). Additionally, given the low number of Moklen speakers, it is also not possible to systematically analyze sociolinguistic factors. However, that all participants of the study similarly provided instances of word-form shifts suggested that it was indeed a general phenomenon.

4. Results

The 16 TEPS sessions selected for analysis amounted to approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes of speech. Within this, a total of 530 monosyllabic alternant tokens made up of 64 lexemes were elicited across the entire TEPS data set. These included 28 nouns, 31 verbs, and 5 closed-class items (1 classifier, 2 numbers, and 2 prepositions). Table 3 provides these figures along with the overall frequency of the corresponding disyllables of all monosyllabic alternant tokens in that lexical class. While the focus of our main analysis is on the use of monosyllabic alternants overall and within word-form shifts, we can offer these figures as a general indication of the frequency of the reduced word-form in comparison to its corresponding disyllabic form with this data set (e.g., *káːn* vs. *ʔɛkáːn* 'fish'). A fixed-effects logistic regression model was run to analyze the effects of lexical class on mono-

syllabic alternants, using the 'glm' function in the R environment (R Core Team, 2016, v. 4.1.2).

Table 3. TEPS monosyllabic alternants by lexical class

Class	# of Lexemes	Tokens	
		Monosyllable	Disyllable
Nouns	28	288	1,139
Verbs	31	163	352
Closed class	5	79	19
Total	**64**	**530**	**1,510**

The model used categorical encoding for the lexical class, with nouns set as the reference group. In this model there were more disyllabic nouns and verbs but more monosyllabic closed class items. The intercept ($\beta = 1.375$, $p < .001$) shows the log-odds of being a monosyllabic noun. Compared to nouns, closed-class items ($\beta = -2.800$, $p < .001$) and verbs ($\beta = -0.605$, $p < .001$) were more likely to be monosyllabic. Disparities here are due in large part to the structure of the TEPS task. Context scenes trigger nominal descriptions of discourse referents (10a), which are then depicted across a total of three pictures (see Figure 1). Verbs, on the other hand, were not typically elicited until the target scene and could potentially have two overt nominal referring expressions filling core argument slots (10b). Resolution scenes also portray the agents and patients of each sequence; but the transitive event is completed, and a new activity is depicted, thereby eliciting a new verb (10c). As for the few closed-class items elicited, the monosyllabic word-form was the preferred form. For a detailed summary of the model, see Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of logistic regression coefficients for monosyllabic alternant by lexical class

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	z value	p-value
Intercept (Noun)	1.37495	0.06596	20.846	< 2e-16 ***
Closed-class vs Noun	−2.79995	0.26389	−10.610	< 2e-16 ***
Verb vs Noun	−0.60506	0.11544	−5.241	1.59e-07 ***

Note.
*** $p < 0.001$. Model details: Null deviance = 2337.2 on 2039 degrees of freedom, Residual deviance = 2174.7 on 2037 degrees of freedom, AIC = 2180.7, Convergence achieved after 4 Fisher Scoring iterations.

4.1 Nouns

The 288 nominal monosyllabic alternant tokens were assigned information-status tags at both the r-level and l-level. With the primary distinction at each dimension being "given" vs. "new", the nominal tokens, therefore, fit into four information-status profiles. As shown in Table 5, most nominal monosyllabic alternant tokens fit within the categories l&r-new (30.21%) and l&r-given (61.11%). Monosyllabic tokens appearing within instances of *word-form shifts* — a change between the disyllabic and monosyllabic word-form — typically had an l&r-given information-status profile.

Table 5. Information status of nominal monosyllabic alternants

Lexical	Referential	Monosyllabic alternant tokens	Proportion occurring as part of a word-form shift
new	new	87 (30.21%)	5/87
new	given	22 (7.64%)	4/22
given	new	3 (1.04%)	1/3
given	given	176 (61.11%)	117/176
Total=		**288**	**127/288**

Alternants tagged l&r-given indicate that within a sequence description the monosyllabic alternant was a previously used lexical concept for a referent with a coreferential antecedent. Notable of the 176 tokens in this category was that 117 occurred as part of a word-form shift. Unlike monosyllabic alternants with the l&r-new tag, the l&r-given monosyllabic alternants commonly had a *preceding* full disyllabic form. Therefore, being marked both lexically and referentially given in this case reflects that the disyllabic form often activated the lexical concept and established the referent. Put another way, for most cases of nominal word-form shifts, the appearance of the monosyllabic alternants signifies reference to common ground content. Still, considering that there were many nominal monosyllabic alternants with "new" tags, we propose that the observed changes in word-form outline a more general backgrounding phenomenon of a shift to topical information, rather than a mere correlation with "givenness" at either the lexical or referential level. In support of this, we highlight the use of nominal monosyllabic alternants in IU-initial positions and as the heads of compounds.

There are several things to note about shifts from disyllabic to monosyllabic word-form. For one, a disyllable might first appear as a sort of citation form for an initial description of a referent before being immediately reduced. This is the case in (11) where the speaker first uses *ʔɔlá:n* 'snake' but, when later qualifying their

description with a modifier *kʰiaw5* 'to be green', uses monosyllabic *láːn* 'snake' in the typical compound structure.

(11) *ʔɔláːn … **láːn** kʰiaw5*
snake snake be.green
'A snake…a green snake.' [NJ.A17.1]

The reduction of the disyllable may also happen when the lexeme becomes an l&r-given grammatical subject. For example, in (12), we first see initial use of the disyllabic word-form *ʔɔláːn* 'snake' in the context scene, but then in the target scene monosyllabic *láːn* appears at the start of the clause in (12b).

(12) a. *ʔɔláːn ɤj*
snake VOC
'A snake, ah!' [NN.A17.1]
b. ***láːn** bətɔ́k kakáj=ɲáː siʔ4 jaːj1*
snake strike foot=3SG PRT grandmother
'The snake is striking your foot, grandma!' [NN.A17.2]

Nominal word-form shifts overwhelmingly involved disyllables *before* monosyllables, yet the shift was not always immediate. For example, in (13), the lexeme *kabáːŋ* 'boat' appears three times as a grammatical subject, but it is not until the third instance in (13c) that it is reduced to its monosyllabic form, *báːŋ*. Note that for the realization of *kabáːŋ* in both (13b) and (13c), the information-status profile is l&r-given.

(13) a. *kabáːŋ bút*
boat run
'A boat is going.' [LI.P19.1]
b. *kabáːŋ kɤːj1 batɤ́j lɤːj1*
boat ground rock INTS
'The boat grounds onto a rock!' [LI.P19.2]
c. ***báːŋ** kalám lɛːw4*
boat sink already
'The boat has sunk.' [LI.P19.3]

A similar pattern was also elicited within a single target scene, as shown in (14). Here, disyllabic *kicúːm* 'bird' was used twice before shortening to the monosyllabic form. The first IU shows the speaker hesitated momentarily whilst identifying the sequence's new patient, *lacíː* 'worm'. The speaker then completes the transitive clause in the second IU; note, though, that when the entire proposition is reiterated in a third IU, the lexeme for 'bird' is realized in its monosyllabic form.

(14) *kicúm ɲám=ɲá:* … *kicúm ɲám=ɲá: lací:* … ***cúm*** *ɲám lací:*
bird eat=3SG … bird eat=3SG worm … bird eat worm
'The bird eat… The bird is eating a worm. The bird is eating a worm'
[TG.13A.2]

For nominal *word-form shifts*, there was an overwhelming tendency for the co-occurring disyllabic alternant to be l&r-new, as shown in Figure 3; thus, the loss of minor-syllables across contiguous utterances correlated with a general informational shift from "new" to "given".

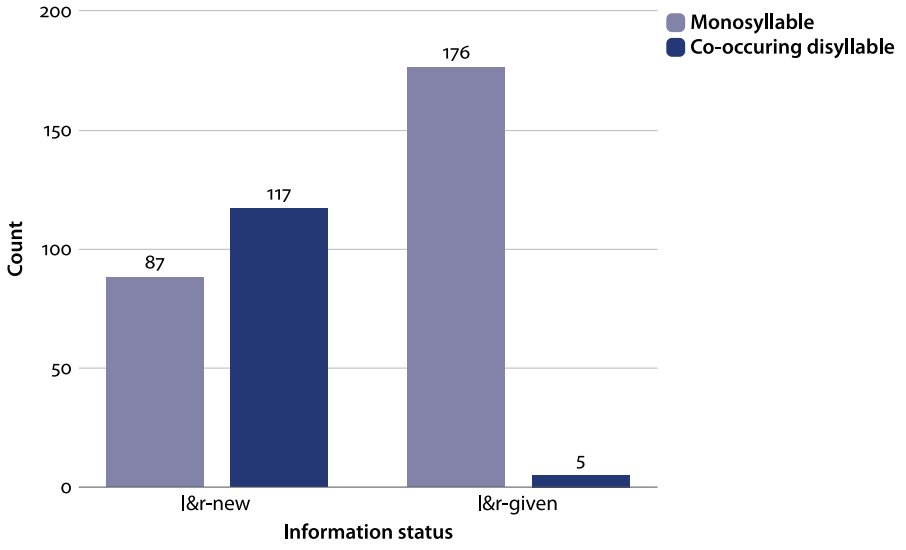

Figure 3. Information status of "new" and "given" nouns and co-occurring disyllables

A closer look at the context around clipping of the minor-syllable offers several points for consideration. One significant factor is a monosyllabic alternant's appearance at the left-edge of an IU, often the starting point for new utterances. Within cases of word-form shifts, 95/127 nominal monosyllabic alternants appeared in an IU-initial position. For example, in the sequence description in (15) (see Figure 1 for illustrations), we can see the change in word-form for both *ʔɛkáːn* 'fish' and *kətáːm* 'crab' occurs not only with a shift to l&r-given, but in both instances, the monosyllabic form begins its respective IU. Especially instructive in (15c), however, is the reappearance of disyllabic form *ʔɛkáːn* 'fish' in a position within the predicate, despite being l&r-given.

(15) a. ***ʔɛkáːn*** *namáːʔ lám* t^{h}*aŋ5*
fish enter in bucket
'A fish is going in a bucket.' [LW.P14.1]

b. ***káːn*** *béːt caːk2 tʰaŋ5 … **kətáːm** kʰiːp3=ɲáː*
fish exit from bucket crab grab=3SG
'The fish goes out of the bucket. A crab grabs it.' [LW.P14.2]

c. ***táːm*** *ɲám **ʔɛkáːn***
crab eat fish
'The crab eats the fish.' [LW.P14.3]

So, while a shift to "given" characterizes one aspect of minor syllable loss, the position at the start of an utterance seems to offer a key clue. Specifically, it suggests that reduction of a disyllabic lexeme may occur when an IU begins with common ground content. Drawing from Cresti's (2018) illocutionary model, these IU-initial monosyllabic alternants can be construed as marking the "field of application" of an utterance's illocutionary force. That is, the monosyllabic alternants reliably appear as an utterance's starting point upon which more information is added. In other words, although the l&r-given tag might be a frequent feature, reduction into a monosyllabic alternant may be merely indicative of something (e.g., a word, idea, or referent) being sufficiently topical. That is, *pragmatically* the corresponding referents are being *presented* as mutually known common ground content (Masia, 2022).

As shown in Table 5, many nominal alternants also had "new" tags. Most of these were the 87 l&r-new nominal alternants. Alternants in this category signify first uses of a lexical concept for discourse referents with no coreferential antecedent. Being maximally "new" these alternants first stood out as they were counter to the idea that "givenness" at some information-status level was underlying the realization of reduced word-forms. For these l&r-new alternants, most functioned as the head of a compound, constructions previously identified by Larish (1999). The two most frequent within the data were reduced forms for *pɔkɔ́n* 'tree' and *buwáːk* 'fruit' (e.g., *kɔ́n pɛcʰáŋ* 'banana tree' and *wáːk paʔɔ́ːk* 'mango'). Typically, these compounds were used for initial descriptions of "new" referents depicted in context scenes. Highlighting their role as nominal heads, Examples (16) and (17) show how *niʔúːn* 'coconut' appears in compounds indicating either the tree or its fruit. Note also in the second IU in (17), an additional shift to monosyllabic *ʔúːn* 'coconut' with the addition of a further modifier *bəluàŋ* 'to be fresh'.

(16) ***kɔ́n*** *niʔúːn*
tree coconut
'A coconut tree.' [LN.P11.1]

(17) *nɤ̌j **wáːk** niʔúːn … wáːk **ʔúːn** bəluàŋ*
this fruit coconut fruit coconut be.fresh
'This is a coconut, a fresh coconut.' [NK.P2.1]

The high frequency of *wá:k* and *kɔ́:n* as l&r-new alternants must first be understood as a direct result of our stimulus design: depictions of fruits and trees were used as non-human inanimate referents in multiple sequences (see Appendix). Still though, that these were l&r-new challenged the idea that a category of information status could account for the use of monosyllabic alternants. Consider also that the next two most common l&r-new alternants were monosyllabic forms for *ʔɛbá:p* 'elder.male' and *ʔibú:m* 'elder.female'. These also functioned as nominal heads in compounds like *bá:p pʰɔ:3tʰaw3* 'an elder old man' or *bú:m mináj* lit. 'elder female woman'. More generally, *bá:p* and *bú:m* were known to serve as honorifics before individuals' names, like *bá:p sam5pan1* 'Elder Sampan' or *bú:m là:p* 'Elder Lap', but within the TEPS data, they were used along with a modifier in the same manner as other compounds. Overall, because we chose to depict fruits, trees, and elderly people in some context scenes, alternants with an l&r-new information status are largely made up of these four lexemes (71.5%). Still, that they and other similar nominal compounds occurred while "new" undermines a sheer information-status based explanation.

Masia's (2022) framing of *topics* as a discourse strategy of "broad evidentiality" holds that topics encode information "which represents *mutual* knowledge established as shared conceptual grounding with both speaker and hearer as committed source" (p. 83). Viewing reduction into a monosyllabic alternant as often corresponding with topical information could help contextualize some of the l&r-new alternants within the discourse context of the TEPS task. In taking this line of thinking, we are zooming out to the broader context of the TEPS sessions. Consider that since the stimulus was visible to both speaker and hearer, when the nominal compounds were first elicited in a context scene, the speaker was beginning from a point of *mutual* knowledge. That is, the contents of the illustration were already "situationally evoked" for both participant and interviewer.[7] Initial reference to the illustration might even occur along with a deictic gesture (see Figure 2). Descriptions of context scenes, therefore, typically begin without question as to whether something was a tree, fruit, or fish. Instead, the speaker's aim and the weight of their illocutionary force is in sharing their individual interpretation of the referent's kind. For example, in (18), a speaker first commits to the monosyllabic form of *ʔɛká:n* 'fish' before indicating that it is an 'Asian sea bass' with use of a nominal compound.

(18) ***ká:n*** *... ká:n kəpʰóŋ*
fish fish asian.sea.bass
'A fish…an Asian sea bass.' [LN.P5.1]

7. See Section 5 for concerns on the use of a picture-based elicitation for information structure studies.

For nominal compounds there are several reasons to believe that for many lexemes the monosyllabic alternants function as a sort of class noun. However, it is worth stressing that for compounds there is no semantic difference in terms of compositionality with use of the full disyllabic form in place of the monosyllabic form (e.g., *ʔɛkáːn kəpʰóŋ* 'Asian sea bass'). A rare example of the monosyllabic form occurring before the disyllabic form in (19) shows the equivalence of either word-form as nominal head. In (19a) the lexeme *pɔkɔ́n* 'tree' first appears as the monosyllabic head of a compound for 'banana tree', but when the referring expression moves into the predicate in (19b), the disyllabic form is used.

(19) a. ***kɔ́n*** *pɛcʰáŋ*
tree banana
'A banana tree.' [CU.P11.1]

b. *nuwáːj* ***pɔkɔ́n*** *pɛcʰáŋ*
fell tree banana
'He is felling the banana tree.' [CU.P11.2]

As shown in Table 5, a small portion of tokens fit within the l-new&r-given category.[8] This category represents use of an unused lexical concept for a previously mentioned discourse referent, as in (20) where the speaker first uses *mináj* 'woman', then later switches to the monosyllabic alternant form of *ʔɛnɔ́ŋ* 'mother' when describing the same referent in a subsequent scene. Hence, in this instance, the monosyllabic alternant *nɔ́ŋ* 'mother' is lexically *new* yet referentially *given*. However, as it is serving as the grammatical subject in an IU-initial position, this use of a monosyllabic alternant is still consistent with an interpretation of nominal alternants aligning with topical information. Most instances in this category are of this nature.

(20) *mináj (…)* ***nɔ́ŋ*** *mɛ́ːʔ ʔanáːt*
woman mother carry offspring
'A woman (…) The mom is carrying her child.' [LN.P1.1–3]

Most nominal monosyllabic alternants (61.11%) were l&r-given (see Table 5), a finding that at first supports the claim that "given" information-statuses motivates

8. The other category, l-given&r-new ($n=3$), comprised cases in which the same lexeme was used in two contiguous sequences. In arranging the order of TEPS sequences, we aimed to avoid eliciting the same lexical material in contiguous sequences. Nevertheless, there were 3 instances where speakers interpreted a context scene as related to the prior sequence. For example, a final resolution scene ended with a depiction of a child, then in an immediately following context scene of a new sequence depictions of grown adults were interpreted as children. Use of *canáːt* 'child' or its monosyllabic would therefore occur before lexical newness resets within the RefLex Scheme (i.e., 5 IUs). Monosyllabic alternants elicited under this condition, therefore, were regarded as invalid, as they bypassed a control of our stimulus design.

the use of the reduced form. However, uses of monosyllables with "new" tags and the prevalent pattern of word-form shifts of disyllables before monosyllables suggests a broader framing of the motivation for monosyllabic alternants: they correspond with topical information rather than just any individual information status.

4.2 Verbs

A total of 163 monosyllabic alternant tokens from 31 verbal lexemes appeared within the TEPS data. As outlined in Section 3.3, the information status of verbs is classified solely at the lexical level. For example, in (21) the difference between l-new and l-given is shown with the unused lexical concept *saʔ2dut2* 'to trip' in (21a) and the previously used lexical concept *dut2* 'to trip' in (21b).

(21) a. *pʰɔ:3tʰaw3 ləbút* **[*saʔ2dut2*]$^{\text{l-new}}$** *tɔkát*
old.person run trip tree.stump
'The old person runs and trips on a stump.' [NK.P23.2]

b. *pʰɔ:3tʰaw3* **[*dut2*]$^{\text{l-given}}$** *tɔkát təʔɔ́t təlɔ́:ʔ*
old.person trip tree.stump knee scraped
'The old person has tripped on a stump and scraped their knee.'
[NK.P23.3]

As shown in Table 6, there were 92 l-new and 71 l-given verbal monosyllabic alternants, with l-given tokens often a member of a word-form shift (44/47). The initial take-away, therefore, was that lexical newness did not preclude use of a verbal monosyllabic alternant, a result ruling out a purely givenness-based explanation at the lexical level. In terms of word-form shifts, however, the prevailing pattern again was *disyllables preceding monosyllables*. Further examination of these instances provided several indications that the loss of the minor syllable was accompanying a backgrounding of the verbal concept. First, there was integration of more elements into the verb phrase, such as verbal modifiers or grammatical objects. However, another key clue was the proximity of reduced verbal alternants to positions of ellipsed arguments.

Table 6. Information status of verbal monosyllabic alternants

Lexical	Referential	Monosyllabic alternant tokens	Proportion occurring as part of a word-form shift
new	–	92 (56.44%)	3/92
given	–	71 (43.56%)	44/71
Total =		**163**	**47**

For verbal lexemes, it seems at first that the two word-forms are equivalent in lexically-new contexts. Moreover, there were several instances of both the disyllabic and monosyllabic forms being elicited under either stimulus condition. For example, the verb *nəpɔ́ːk* 'to launder' was variably realized in target scenes of agent-initial and patient-initial versions of the same sequence, as shown with contrasting examples in (22) and (23).

(22) Agent-initial sequence #19
  a. ***nəpɔ́ːk*** *cəwát*
     launder clothes
     '(She) is washing clothes.' [NJ.A19.2]
  b. ***pɔ́ːk*** *cəwát*
     launder clothes
     '(She) is washing clothes.' [TW.A19.2]

(23) Patient-initial sequence #19
  a. *pʰɔːɜtʰaw3* ***nəpɔ́ːk*** *cəwát*
     old.person launder clothes
     'An elderly person is washing the clothes.' [WN.P19.2]
  b. *mináj* ***pɔ́ːk*** *bajɤ́j*
     woman launder shirt
     'A woman is washing a shirt.' [LN.P19.2]

Given the verbal monosyllabic alternants' overwhelming appearance when l-new, mere lexical givenness can be ruled out as an underlying cause. Therefore, we again looked at word-form shifts as a context of comparison. Here, we found that within instances of word-form shifts, a monosyllabic alternant's co-occurring disyllable was usually l-new and the reduced monosyllabic form was l-given, as shown in Figure 4.

One aspect of shifts from disyllabic to monosyllabic is the integration of more components into the predicate. Consider the following two sequence descriptions featuring the lexeme *didúːn* 'to sleep'. In (24a), we first see the disyllabic form appear as the sole element of a simple verb phrase. The sequence description continues through the target scene (24b), but by the resolution scene in (24c), monosyllabic *dúːn* 'to sleep' appears in a more complex verb phrase along with the auxiliary verb *bɤ́j* 'to be able' and an adverb *ʔabɔ́ːʔ* 'together'.

(24) a. *canáːt* ***didúːn***
     child sleep
     'A child is sleeping.' [NK.P7.1]
  b. *máʔ* *pɔ́ʔ* *mɛ́n cəwát pit2* *ʔanáːt*
     mother 3SG take cloth close offspring
     'Its mother takes a blanket and covers the child.' [NK.P7.2]

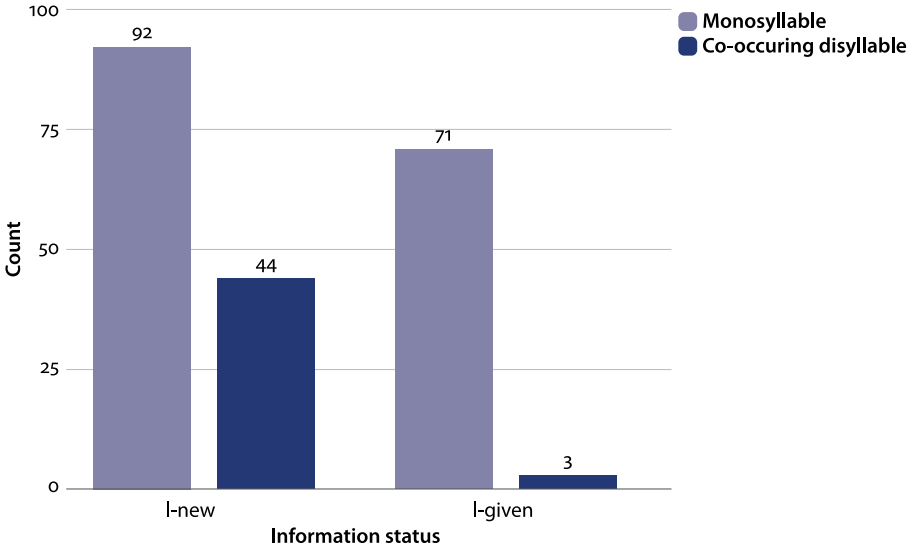

Figure 4. Information status of verbal alternants and of co-occurring disyllables

c. *máʔ kʰuːʒ ʔanáːt bɤ́j* ***dúːn*** *ʔabóːʔ*
mother and offspring be.able sleep together
'The mother and child are sleeping together.' [NK.P7.3]

Now, consider an agent-initial version of the same sequence in (25). In this example, the lexeme *didúːn* 'to sleep' appears during the target scene as the sole element of a causative complement after the patient *ʔanáːt* 'offspring'. For the resolution scene, the same verbal lexeme appears, realized as monosyllabic *dúːn* 'to sleep' but with the addition of a prepositional phrase.

(25) a. *mináj*
woman
'A woman..' [LN.A7.2]

b. *bɔ́h ʔanáːt* ***didúːn***
make offspring sleep
'She is putting her child to sleep.' [LN.A7.2]

c. *ʔaː ʔɛnɔ́ŋ* ***dúːn*** *troŋ1 náːt*
VOC mother sleep directly offspring
'Ah, the mother sleeps by her kid.' [LN.A7.3]

With word-form shifts for verbs, the minor syllable is elided when the lexeme is reused. This can be preliminarily explained as reflection of a process of information integration. With the TEPS task, speakers are repeatedly required to establish two referents and predicative and relational information concerning them.

In descriptions of resolution scenes like (24c) and (25c), a verb's minor syllable is elided as the speaker works towards linking all this information together. On a surface level, what the TEPS stimulus captures is the speaker first being confronted with a brand-new event and subsequently incorporating it in relation to a new discourse referent, but understood from an IS perspective, it seems possible to view the observed reduction of word-form as correlating with a general backgrounding of the verbal concept.

Findings with verbs were consistent with our suggestion, raised earlier for nouns, that in terms of topic/focus, the monosyllabic alternants are often indicative of topical information. That is, at the time of speech, they represent *mutual knowledge* established as shared conceptual grounding between interlocutors, or as put by Masia (2022), they are part of the "syntactic region on which the speaker shows weaker (if any) commitment" (p. 79). Common use of verbal alternants as starting points for incomplete predicates provides additional evidence. In these cases, the speaker first produces the full disyllabic verb, without a grammatical object. Then, in an immediately following IU, the speaker starts from the reduced form and adds more information. For example, in (26), monosyllabic *ŋɛ́ːn* 'to chase' begins an IU completing the proposition from the previous IU. Within cases of word-form shifts, 31/47 verbal monosyllabic alternants appeared in an IU-initial position.

(26) *máʔ pɔ́ʔ nəŋɛ́ːn … **ŋɛ́ːn** ʔanáːt*
mother 3SG chase chase offspring
'Its mother is chasing. (She is) chasing her child.' [EW.P4.2]

In cases like these, we can see verbal alternants as aligning with topics, given their proximity to the positions of ellipsed arguments. Consider that the most prevalent and extreme form of backgrounding information in Moklen is zero-anaphora (see § 2.4). In (22) and (23), we saw examples of the variable realizations of "new" uses of *nəpɔ́ːk* 'to launder'. On their own, these were not particularly revealing, but if we contrast both word-forms in the context of a shift in word-form, we see that reappearance of a lexeme in its monosyllabic form aligns with the topical portion of an utterance. For example, in (27a), the disyllabic *nəpɔ́ːk* 'to launder' first appears clause-finally as part of a serial verb construction. Note that the given agent is ellipsed, while a grammatical object *cəwát* 'clothes' is present. Then, in (27b), the speaker begins with a detached adverbial phrase wherein not only are both agent and object ellipsed, but the word-form has shifted to monosyllabic *pɔ́ːk* for the portion of the utterance which clearly outlines mutually shared information.

(27) a. *Ø lɛʔ4 mɛ́n cəwát bá:ʔ nəpɔ́:k*
and take clothes carry launder
'And (she) takes the clothes to wash.' [YG.P8.2]

b. *pʰɔ:4 Ø pɔ́:k Ø set2 ká:ʔ … bá:ʔ niʔù:n hɛ́ʔ la:w1*
when launder finished PRF carry dry.in.sunlight at clothesline
'When (she) is finished washing (them), she takes (them) to dry at a clothesline.' [YG.P8.3]

Findings for verbal alternants in terms of lexical givenness showed no overall correspondence between the monosyllabic word-form and the l-given information status. However, examination of verbal monosyllabic alternants within instances of word-form shifts indicated that the loss of the minor syllable could be indicative of a backgrounding of the verbal concept. To support this interpretation, we provided examples of verbal monosyllabic alternants appearing within more complex verb phrases and instances where they acted as starting points for additional information. Our interpretation of the informational role of verbal monosyllabic alternants relies heavily on zero-anaphora as representative of the most extreme form of informational backgrounding. A verbal alternant's proximity to the position of ellipsed arguments, therefore, strongly implies an alignment towards either mutual knowledge or the topical portion of an utterance.

4.3 Closed-class items

Many lexemes from closed-class categories also display variability in word-form. In the TEPs data, only 79 monosyllabic alternants from 5 closed-class lexemes were elicited. Moreover, cases of word-form shifts were rare as corresponding disyllabic forms were scarce, as shown in Table 7. While we are extremely limited in our findings here, that these monosyllabic alternants often appear integrated within larger grammatical units implies an affinity towards the informational background. Still, with some selected examples, use of closed-class monosyllabic alternants appears consistent with our analysis.

Appearing in the data were alternants for numerical lexemes *lɛmá:ʔ* 'five' and *duwà:ʔ* 'two', for which monosyllabic *wà:ʔ* was the only realization, despite having disyllabic attestations elsewhere. Disyllabic numerical lexemes were already known to be reduced in numerical compounds, such as *wà:ʔ pʰlɔ́h* 'twenty', which also features another monosyllabic alternant of *cʰəpʰlɔ́h* 'ten'. However, in the TEPS data, alternants for numerical lexemes only appeared within classifier phrases, as in (28) and (29), where they are used to specify an amount. Note that *pá:t* 'four' is a true monosyllabic lexeme.

Table 7. Monosyllabic alternants in closed classes

Lexeme	Gloss	l-new	l-given	Mono. tokens	Disyllabic tokens	Cases of word-form shift
dalám	'in'	30	10	40	7	3
bulàt	CLF	9	6	15	5	0
duwàːʔ	'two'	13	2	15	0	0
datáː	'on'	6	2	8	4	1
lɛmáːʔ	'five'	1	0	1	3	0
		59 (74.68%)	20 (25.32%)	79	19	4

(28) *niː4 ʔɛkáːn … páːt pʰɔ́h …. **máːʔ** pʰɔ́h*
this fish four CLF five CLF
'These are fish…four…five (of them).' [NN.P6.1–2]

(29) *paʔɔ́ːk … ʔɔ́ːk **wàːʔ làt***
mango mango two CLF
'Mangoes. Two mangoes.' [CU.A21.1]

In (29), we also see the monosyllabic alternant for *bulàt*, a general classifier for objects used exclusively for numerical values with either 'one' or 'two' in the ones place (Larish, 2005). Both word-forms were attested within the data (the disyllabic form to a lesser extent, as shown in Table 7), and both could take the numerical proclitic *ʔa=* 'one' (e.g., *ʔa=bulàt* and *ʔa=làt*). Interestingly, despite only having 5 tokens, disyllabic *bulàt* was always in a clause-final focused position, as in (30) where it is used in emphasizing the wholeness of a pig on a spigot.

(30) *mə4nut4 páːt lùj … piniáŋ babúːj tʰaŋ4 **bulàt***
person four CLF roast pig all CLF
'The four people…they are roasting the whole pig.' [WN.A12.3]

Information status marking for the classifier *làt* differed from other closed-class items as it could also serve as the head of a referring expression and, therefore, tagging at both the lexical and referential level were applicable. For example, in (31) *làt* is used to provide definite reference to individual chickens. One interpretation of these constructions would be that the nominal heads of these referring expressions are ellipsed and thus the monosyllabic alternant is the remaining overt topical information. Note also the word-form shift for the verb *kəpʰlàːt* 'to fall'.

(31) *manɔ́k* (…) **Ø** *làt* *ni:4* *kəp^{h}là:t* … **Ø** *làt* *ni:4* *p^{h}là:t* *bú:k* *lɤ:j1*
chicken CLF this fall CLF this fall under INTS
'Chickens. (…) This one is falling. This one is falling all the way down.'
[LP.A15.1–2]

The other two closed-class items were the prepositions *dalám* 'in' and *datá:* 'on', both of which were more common in their monosyllabic form (see Table 7). Again, given the relatively low occurrence of these alternants, we are limited in how much we can say. However, a pattern of word-form shifts, similar to what occurs with verbs, has also been noted for these prepositions as well. For example, in (32), *datá:* 'on' ends the first IU without a grammatical object, but in the next IU, monosyllabic *tá:* occurs at the left-edge, followed by the additional remaining information.

(32) *ʔɤ́j* *nəmát* *ʔɛ́:m* *datá:* … ***tá: caná:t***
dog be.scared exist on on child
'The dog gets scared and is on…on the child.'

As tokens for closed-class items were less frequent, there were no clear findings for givenness, at either a lexical or referential level of information status tagging. However, because many closed-class lexemes typically function within larger grammatical units, like numerical compounds or classifier phrases, it seems likely that they are aligned more with backgrounded information. However, given the paucity of data for closed-class items, as well as the need for more theoretical development (see § 5), the matter cannot yet be fully resolved.

5. Discussion

Findings from this study better equipped us for interpreting the role of common ground knowledge in the elision of disyllabic lexemes' minor syllables during discourse. The TEPS data offered 530 monosyllabic alternant tokens of disyllabic lexemes from different lexical classes. Analysis in terms of the RefLex Scheme's categories of information status showed that lexical or referential givenness did not fully account for the use of monosyllabic alternants overall. However, instances of word-form shift — a change between the disyllabic and monosyllabic word-form during speech — clearly outlined a pattern across lexical classes of "new" disyllables before "given" monosyllables, a finding clearly seen in Figure 5.

Inspection of the monosyllabic alternants' roles in these contexts showed that the elision of the minor syllable occurs alongside a shift towards topical information. For nouns, the topical interpretation was evidenced with monosyllabic alternants being either a "given" grammatical subject or the head of a nomi-

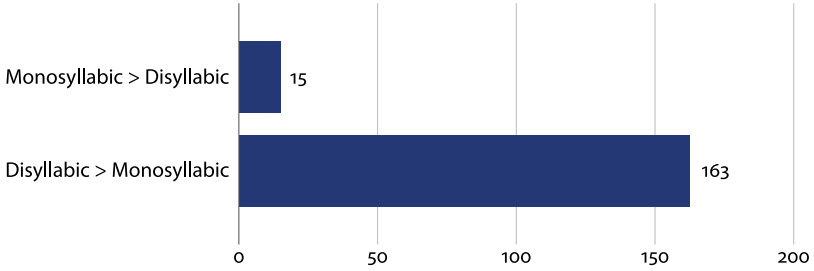

Figure 5. Patterns of word-form shifts across all lexical classes

nal compound. For verbs, alignment to backgrounded information was shown through the integration of more elements into the verb phrase and proximity to positions of ellipsed arguments. Findings for closed-class items were limited, but we could still outline similar patterns found with alternants of other classes, such as the appearance of the monosyllabic alternant in an IU-initial position, where it can function as a starting point for additional information.

Returning to the types of Moklen texts that were the original impetus for this study, the view of monosyllabic alternants as aligning to topical information has clarified some of the observed variation in word-form. For example, word-form shifts across question-and-answer sequences are consistent with the topical interpretation. In (33) one speaker is describing an interaction between two characters of a story. First, the speaker has A ask B if he had stolen some fish. This is done using the full disyllabic form *nəlát* 'to steal' and overt reference to the object *ʔɛkaːn* 'fish'. Then, B's response begins with the monosyllabic form *lát* 'to steal' before then focusing on negating the proposition with the post-verbal negator *háh*. Supporting a topical interpretation, the verbal alternant appears at the left-edge of the IU, and all grammatical arguments are omitted.

(33) a. *jáːj* ***nəlát*** *ʔɛkáːn káːʔ*
say/think steal fish QPLR
'They say, "Did you steal these fish?"'

b. ***lát*** *háh*
steal NEG
'No, I didn't.'

A similar sequence in (34) demonstrates the same sort of pattern. Speaker A asks B if they have had enough to eat using the verb *bətáŋ* 'to be satiated'. This time the proposition is affirmed with the post-verbal perfective marker *káʔ*, but again the topic portion of the utterance is conveyed through use of the verbal alternant *táŋ*.

(34) a. ***betáŋ*** *káːʔ*
be.satiated QPLR
'Are you full?'
b. ***táŋ*** *káʔ*
be.satiated PRF
'Yes, I am.'

From this study and continued textual analysis, the directionality of word-form shifts in free-flowing speech strongly suggests that an informational principle could be in play. However, for a study of Moklen, any adoption of a model of information structure presents several challenges, as most theoretical groundwork is built upon highly studied and typologically different languages. Masia's (2022) framing of topic/focus units as discourse strategies of broad evidentiality offered a useful perspective, but our use of "topic" is still mostly in line with commonly accepted notions of the concept (Krifka & Musan, 2012; Vallduví & Engdahl, 2013). Use of the RefLex Scheme provided a practical framework for annotating information status, but application to Moklen still required conceptual work. Therefore, a more robust application of the scheme with better-studied and easily available languages of a similar typological profile is needed to develop methods for information status tagging. More generally, we must also admit that our use of information structure notions (e.g., common ground, information status, and topic/focus) does not fully overcome some of the same core challenges identified in critiques of information structure approaches (Ozerov, 2018; Matić, 2022). These challenges, however, plague almost any conception of discourse as a process of information management and therefore must be left for discussion elsewhere.

One limitation of our study concerns the methodology of the TEPS stimulus. Besides issues around the session conditions (i.e., ideal experimental controls), the use of a picture-based stimulus poses several puzzles, especially when deeper psychological principles are directly implicated within the theoretical framework of IS. For example, if one were to adopt the view that everything within a graphical stimulus is already in some sense "situationally evoked", then categories of "given" and "new" in this genre would point to different mental states than what one gets with an unprompted narrative genre of speech (or any other genre for that matter). There are critiques of picture-based stimuli that target other limitations (Klamer & Moro, 2020), but given the interrelated nature of IS phenomena, inclusion of environmental entities such as a stimulus seemingly add another level of complexity. Despite all these questions and concerns, the TEPS stimulus proved to be a practical means for uncovering Moklen speakers' management of linguistic information within a semi-controlled narrow discourse context. Ultimately, it was an asset in our current drive for documentation of the language

and our need to better understand discourse-based variation of word-form. Still, broader corpora composed of wide-ranging observed communicative events (i.e., dialogues and naturally occurring narratives) is essential for further investigation into Moklen.

Findings from this study offer a new understanding of Moklen monosyllabic alternants beyond previous characterizations of them as mere "colloquial forms" or the minor syllables as "optional" (see § 1). By highlighting their discourse context, a subtle informational aspect of the monosyllabic alternants can be brought into view. Consider (35), an excerpt from the only previously published Moklen text (Larish, 2005). Here, A asks whether it was raining heavily at a specific moment and uses an adverbial phrase headed by the Thai loan *we1la:1* 'time.' The response by B starts by mirroring the adverbial phrase, which in this case can be taken as a topical element. Note, though, that this entire constituent starts with the monosyllabic alternant *la:1* 'time' and features omission of the argument *lot4k^{h}luaŋ3* 'motor vehicle.'

(35) a. [***we1la:1*** *lot4k^{h}luaŋ3 nəmɔ́h*] *kɔjá:n nɔlέŋ lahán háh ká:ʔ*
time motor.vehicle fall.down rain descend many, very NEG QPLR
'When the motorcycle fell, wasn't it raining heavily?'

b. [***la:1*** ***Ø*** *nəmɔ́h ɲú:*] *kɔjá:n plɛʔ plɛʔ já: láʔ lahán háh*
time fall.down DEM.DIST rain little only EMPH many, very NEG
'When it fell, there was only a little rain, not much at all.'

(Larish, 2005, p. 531)

Larish (1999) had originally put forth the term "non-ultimate syllabic aphaeresis" to distinguish the apparent synchronic variability of Moklen lexical forms from diachronic monosyllabization. To the extent that the discourse phenomenon in question needs a specific term, we prefer a more direct phrasing: *minor-syllable elision*. Explicitly defined, minor-syllable elision is a form of clipping in discourse whereby iambic disyllables become abbreviated through omission of the initial minor syllable. Furthermore, framing it as a process of elision underscores the dynamic aspects underlying the reduction and subsequent omission within connected speech.

As our overall understanding of Moklen is still limited, other factors likely impacting minor-syllable elision must also be acknowledged. Within the TEPS data, 64 lexemes had attested monosyllabic alternants, but including data from other texts would add substantially to this number. And while minor-syllable elision was prevalent enough to have sparked this study, we also do not want to overstate its extent, as across Moklen discourse many disyllables within the lexicon do appear to be relatively stable and without attested monosyllabic alternant forms. Which disyllables are susceptible to minor-syllable elision is likely to include

a myriad of phonetic and phonological factors as well as more general information theoretic and usage-based motivations (Jaeger & Buz, 2017; Mahowald, Fedorenko, Piantadosi, & Gibson, 2013). Put simply, there is much more to consider beyond givenness and topichood that could contribute to the types of redundancy that might lead to minor-syllable elision (see 'The smooth signal redundancy hypothesis' Aylett & Turk, 2004).

One factor we would like to explore for further study is the role of prominence as a dynamic principle-shaping discourse (von Heusinger & Schumacher, 2019), where the IU-initial position reliably seems to be an area of lower prosodic prominence. With *prominence* we are only pointing to relative differences in phonetic material and not specifying any singular acoustic cue (Baumann & Cangemi, 2020). Illustrating this idea, Figure 6 juxtaposes two IUs from Example (15), showing minor-syllable elision for the lexemes *kətá:m* 'crab' and *ʔɛká:n* 'fish'. In particular, beyond the elision of the minor syllable resulting in monosyllabic alternants *tá:m* and *ká:n*, the remaining major syllables also appear less prominent within their respective IUs, as demonstrated by the relative differences in intensity and duration for elements at the beginning and ends of each IU. Further underscoring the contrast between word-forms, consider the higher prominence of disyllabic *ʔɛká:n* 'fish' — and the realization of its minor syllable.

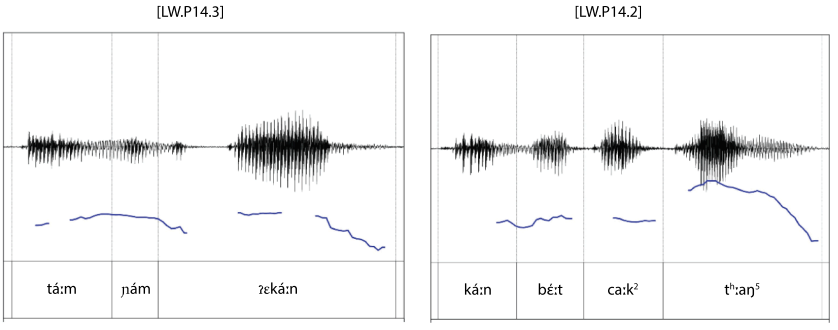

Figure 6. Low prominence with minor-syllable elision

Chafe (1994) places low prominence as a correlate of "givenness". Here, we are highlighting how a frequently topical portion of clausal IUs can also be a site of low prominence. Therefore, the crucial context for minor-syllable elision might be one in which an utterance's point of departure is presented as sufficiently within the common ground (i.e., topical), and thereby an attenuated pronunciation of the disyllable crosses a morphological threshold, causing relatively weak minor syllables to be lost. It remains to be determined what precisely the role of promi-

nence is; however, the roles of intonation units and other prosodic factors remain crucial areas for further study.

Moklen minor-syllable elision also links to discussion of diachronic monosyllabization. Larish (1999) places diachronic changes, like a shift to monosyllabism, as analogous to changes in Chamic languages, fellow Austronesian languages of MSEA in contact with Austroasiatic languages.[9] However, for Cham, Brunelle (2020) argues that contact-induced change probably happened in indirect ways and that monosyllabization was more likely driven by internal phonetic and phonological pressures. Moreover, Chamic disyllabic and monosyllabic forms are said to currently co-exist in a sort of quasi-diglossia (Brunelle, 2009), but complete deletion of the "presyllable" (i.e., minor syllable) is still held as the most common path for monosyllabization. Furthermore, for languages in MSEA, there are anecdotal reports of ongoing monosyllabization, through loss of initial syllables, in Cham (Alieva, 1994) and in Ruc (Solntsev, 1996), an Austroasiatic language of Vietnam. These reports are reminiscent of earlier framings of Moklenic monosyllabic alternants as "colloquial forms". However, despite all indications that minor-syllable elision could potentially be a more widespread phenomenon in MSEA, there appears to be no discourse contextualization of alternant word-forms nor actual examples within the literature of the clipping of minor syllables within spontaneous speech.

The interesting broader diachronic point is that monosyllabic lexemes developing from historically polysyllabic roots has been cast as a "common evolutionary path" for languages throughout MSEA (Michaud, 2012), and loss of minor syllables is at least one part of what Matisoff (1990) describes as "cyclic swings of expansion and contraction" in word formation for these languages. In this cycle, there are two logical possibilities for a diachronic change into a monosyllabic word-form: either the minor syllable merges into a new onset of the major syllable (Thach, 1999) or the minor syllables are omitted. However, within the literature, such phenomena are most often only discussed in terms of long-term systemic phonological changes. A realistic model of language change, rather, must have monosyllabization in its first stages occurring in individual speech acts (Croft, 2000). Minor-syllable elision, therefore, as a discourse-level phenomenon offers some potential cognitive motivations for how reduced variants of word-forms could be generated within a population of utterances and thereby contribute towards a more general shift towards monosyllabicity.

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9. It is worth noting that Southern Thai, the language with the most contemporary influence on Moklen, has many monosyllabic variants of Standard Thai forms with clipped initial syllables (e.g., *kʰànǔn* vs. *nǔn* 'jackfruit', *sàʔpʰāːn* vs. *pʰāːn* 'bridge', *càmùːk* vs. *mùːk* 'nose', etc.).

Description of minor-syllable elision in this study, therefore, offers one picture of how word-form changes may initially start when phonologically weak minor syllables quickly give way through discourse-based deaccentuation and as a result produce a monosyllabic alternant. The precise role of informational factors for such changes must be studied in more easily-available and better-studied languages. However, given that minor-syllable elision is likely attested elsewhere in MSEA, and given the general theoretical connection between word-form reduction and informational redundancy (Linders & Louwerse, 2022), next steps would be to increase experimental rigor (e.g., Kanwal et al., 2017) and discourse-based investigation into information structure and word-form for other languages of the region.

6. Conclusion

In this study, we looked at word-form in Moklen with regard to its monosyllabic alternants and word-form shifts. To investigate the role of common ground knowledge in the use of monosyllabic alternants, we assessed whether "givenness" in terms of the RefLex Scheme's two-dimensional model of information status could account for the reduction of canonically disyllabic lexemes. We found that no singular information status category was indicative of use of monosyllabic alternants overall and instead proposed a shift to "topics" — information conveyed as mutual knowledge (Masia, 2022) — as a possible account for the observed changes in Moklen word-form. Further interpreting our findings, we proposed that the variability of word-form within the Moklen lexicon is in part the result of a discourse phenomenon, a process we termed minor-syllable elision, which frames omission of iambic disyllables' initial syllable as connected to discourse-based decreases in prominence. Results from our study are a first step in reconsidering previous characterizations of Moklen monosyllabic variants as "colloquial forms" and minor syllables as "optional". More generally, we have offered a picture from Moklen showing how information structure processes have the potential to contribute both to contextual variation and historical changes in word-form.

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Abbreviations

3	third person
AFFR	affirmative
CLF	classifier
DEM	demonstrative
DIST	distal
EMPH	emphasis
INTS	intensifier
NEG	negation
PRF	perfective
PRT	particle
QPLR	polar question marker
SG	singular
VOC	vocative

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Appendix. Transitive Event Picture Sequences

	Item#	Agent	Patient	Verb	Target Scene description
Human	1	boy	woman	hug	Boy hugs mother.
	2	boy	coconut	open/cut	Boy opens coconut with machete.
	3	girl	water	get/ladle/pours	Girl gets water.
	4	girl	boy	push	Girl pushes boy.
	5	man	fish	fish	Man fishes fish with fishing pole.
	6	man	fish	fish/cast	Man casts net catches fish.
	7	woman	baby	cover	Woman covers child with blanket.
	8	woman	clothes	launder	Woman washes clothes.
	9	grandfather	chicken	kill	Grandpa kills chicken.

Appendix. *(continued)*

	Item#	Agent	Patient	Verb	Target Scene description
	10	grandmother	banana	peel	Grandma peels banana.
	11	group	tree	fell/chop	Father, son, and daughter fell a tree.
	12	group	pig	carry	Men and women carry pig on stick.
Animal	13	bird	caterpillar	bite/pecks/eat	Bird pecks caterpillar.
	14	crab	fish	open/eat/grab	Crab grabs fish.
	15	chickens	branch	fly/perch/break	Chickens break tree branch.
	16	bird	window	crashes/breaks	Bird breaks window.
	17	snake	grandmother	bite	Snake bites grandma.
	18	scorpion	girl	sting	Scorpion stings girl.
Inanimate	19	rock	boat	crash/go	Rock breaks boat.
	20	coconut	bottle	fall/smash/break	Coconut breaks bottle.
	21	mango	crab	fall/smash/break	Mango smashes crab.
	22	tree	house	fall/smash/break	Tree smashes house.
	23	stump	grandfather	trip/go/walk	Tree stump trips grandpa.
	24	fishhook	man	scratch/cut	Fishhook scratches man.

Abstract (Thai)

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาการสลับรูประหว่างรูปคำพยางค์เดียวและรูปคำสองพยางค์ที่อิงกับสัมพันธสารในภาษามอแกลน ซึ่งเป็นภาษาใกล้สูญในตระกูลออสโตรนีเซียนในประเทศไทย งานวิจัยนี้สำรวจว่าปัจจัยด้านโครงสร้างสาระมีผลต่อการตัดเสียงพยางค์แรกของหน่วยศัพท์สองพยางค์หรือไม่ ข้อมูลที่ใช้เป็นข้อมูลที่มาจากการเก็บข้อมูลภาคสนามโดยใช้รูปภาพเพื่อกระตุ้นให้ผู้บอกภาษาพูดคำศัพท์เป้าหมายภายในบริบททางสัมพันธสารที่กำหนด ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าหมวดหมู่ของสถานะสาระ (เช่น “สาระเดิม” หรือ “สาระใหม่”) ไม่สามารถใช้อธิบายการใช้รูปแปรพยางค์เดียวได้อย่างครอบคลุม งานวิจัยนี้จึงประยุกต์ใช้วิธีการแบบ “จากล่างขึ้นบน” ในการศึกษาด้านโครงสร้างสาระ (Matić, 2022; Ozerov, 2018) และเสนอว่าการเปลี่ยนไปเป็นแก่นความ ซึ่งเป็นสาระที่สื่อออกมาเป็นความรู้ร่วมกัน (Masia, 2022) สามารถใช้อธิบายการสลับรูปของรูปคำที่พบในภาษามอแกลนได้ งานวิจัยนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่ากระบวนการด้านโครงสร้างสาระนั้นสามารถทำให้เกิดการสลับรูประหว่างรูปคำพยางค์เดียวและสองพยางค์ในบริบทต่าง ๆ ได้ ถือว่ามีนัยสำคัญต่อการศึกษาการเปลี่ยนแปลงเชิงประวัติของรูปคำในระดับที่กว้างขึ้นต่อไป

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